



## **FRESH HUB – 10 June 2020 – Safety, Quality, & Inspection**

### **Welcome to the June 10<sup>th</sup> Fresh Hub Newsletter.**

In this edition we examine the theme of food safety with a spotlight on topics of traceability and changing chemical residue requirements.

### **Food Safety & Traceability**

*This article is based on a 2015 industry Position Paper entitled “The New Zealand Produce Industry Food Safety & Traceability Framework”. The paper was a collaboration between Anne-Marie Arts & Dr Hans Maurer (The AgriChain Centre) and Mathew Dolan (then Horticulture New Zealand, now CEO of NZ Plant Producers Inc.) and formed the basis for the United Fresh Sustainable Farming Fund Project entitled “Effective Fresh Produce Traceability Systems”. Details on the SSF project are available at <https://www.unitedfresh.co.nz/technical-advisory-group/sff>.*

Food Safety & Traceability are increasingly reaching ‘top of mind’ positions for consumers and regulators alike. Food not only needs to be safe but in order to verify that it is safe and to be able to respond to situations where Food Safety has potentially been compromised, traceability is required. The terms ‘Food Safety’ and ‘Traceability’ represent one and the same challenge when it comes to managing the relationship with the consumer along the entire value chain, from the reality as well as the perception point of view.

Food Safety concerns can arise overnight and from unexpected directions. The 2014 Yersinia outbreak is a case in point. It is therefore right and necessary for the produce industry to develop competencies in the Food Safety & Traceability area beyond those that exist already, with the objectives of protecting the consumer, taking responsibility as an industry for Food Safety & Traceability management in the produce supply chain and engaging with Government on ensuring that legislation and regulation applied to the produce industry is meaningful, relevant, practical and achievable.

Food Safety & Traceability initiatives are no longer optional extras but have rapidly become the norm and expectation as well as the ticket to the ball. In other words, no food related business can operate these days without having appropriate Food Safety & Traceability structures in place. The produce industry is no exception. Just what is ‘appropriate’ is part of the detail that can vary from food sector to food sector and between businesses within the same food supply chains. In the absence of clarity, direction, resolve and accountability, multitudes of uncoordinated systems and/systems components emerge which is unhelpful, confusing, inefficient and costly.

The New Zealand horticultural industry is in growth mode. One of our two main-stream supermarket brands is Australian owned. The major wholesalers have deep linkages into the Australian market and elsewhere. Zespri is a global brand with global reach. It can therefore be expected that New Zealand producers and marketers need to not only operate to local regulatory standards and private schemes requirements but also to several off-shore ones.

The increased focus on Food Safety & Traceability that our industry is experiencing internationally presents an opportunity to apply our combined industry expertise to creating sustainable competitive advantage for New Zealand produce in the global trade environment.



## Sanitiser Use and Export Market Sensitivities to Perchlorate Residues

Perchlorate is a chemical that is seeing increased scrutiny by regulators because of potential human health effects' especially on the thyroid gland in humans. Perchlorate can occur naturally or be introduced by some nitrate fertilisers and is also manufactured for use as a rocket propellant! In the USA, perchlorate is an issue in some areas, due to leaching into the ground water.

In horticulture, Perchlorate, is generally seen as a breakdown product of chlorine sanitisers or chloride in water. Chlorine is a commonly used sanitiser for washing fresh produce hence our interest in this chemical.

We are seeing international moves towards Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) regulation, especially for the European Union (EU).

There is currently limited information available about Perchlorate residue levels in fresh produce in New Zealand. However, we may well see this increase over time due to the potential risks it represents.

To know more contact Anne-Marie Arts on 027 279 5550 or [amarts@agrichain-centre.com](mailto:amarts@agrichain-centre.com).

## Relevant Links for Information on Agri-Chemicals and Residue Limits

We have compiled a few useful MPI links to help you understand Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) in relation to Agri-Chemicals.

- A MRL is the largest amount of an agricultural compound allowed in food. [Find MRLs for New Zealand & other countries, or request MRLs here.](#)
- Pesticide MRL legislation around the world has been collated by MPI, and can be [read here.](#)
- The Food Residues Survey Programme (FRSP) investigates residues and contaminants in food intended for sale in New Zealand's domestic market. [Learn more here.](#)
- The Ministry for Primary Industries ACVM team are seeking feedback on the following MRL proposal: [Proposals to amend the New Zealand Maximum Residue Levels for Agricultural Compounds Food Notice](#), with submissions closing 16 June 2020.